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Debt and the Business Cycle

THE EDITORS

The Eritrean Struggle

LINDA HEIDEN

The Irish Struggle

MARY TURNER

No Nukes! A Review

THE EDITORS

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Some of you, though we would guess probably not many, may find this month's Review of the Month heavy going. It contains a number of tables which we know from experience tend to deter or turn off some readers. In this case, however, the tables are not at all inherently difficult or complicated, and we hope all of you will have the patience to work through them. The subject matter, capitalism's deep-seated addiction to debt, is enormously important, especially in the present phase of the crisis of the world capitalist system; and it is a regrettable fact that even many Marxists, not to mention bourgeois economists, simply do not understand the problem or appreciate its significance. If any of you find our presentation lacking in clarity, let us know and we will do our best to remedy the situation in a future issue.

Sybil May, one of the original founders of MR, who has been in charge of the affairs of Monthly Review Associates since its inception in 1951, celebrated her 85th birthday on May 7th. A festive party attended

(*Continued on inside back cover*)

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DEBT AND THE BUSINESS CYCLE

One of the most characteristic features of the business cycle is the alternating expansion and contraction of credit. During the upturn from a recession or depression, business firms need more money than is flowing into the till. They must rush to grab every emerging profit-making opportunity and to fend off competitors from encroaching on their share of the market. Money is therefore sought for a variety of needs, such as expanding capacity, filling up inventory pipelines, adding labor-saving machinery, and intensifying sales promotion. Banks, most of whose profits come from making loans, are happy to accommodate this rising demand for money. In fact financial institutions add their bit to the expansion of credit during the upswing of the cycle by stimulating new uses of debt by business and consumers.

The feverish speculation that thrives in such an environment, added to the competitive struggles among firms, pushes production beyond what can be maintained, even when account is taken of the accompanying growth of consumer income. And following the inevitable downturn in the cycle comes a contraction of credit. Some loans are wiped off the books because of business failures. But even stronger firms reduce their credit lines as they cut back operations, sell off inventories, and pull in their horns on new construction. Consumer credit of course also contracts as unemployment spreads and incomes decline.

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During this period of debt contraction, the sturdier banks and industrial firms get their finances into better shape, and the decks are cleared for the next upswing in borrowing.

What we have been describing so far is the "normal" pattern of credit cycles. Something new, however, has been added in recent U.S. experience. With the exhaustion of the special prosperity-supporting forces of the early post-Second World War decades and the consequent onset of a period of stagnation, the U.S. economy has become *increasingly addicted to the use of debt*. The characteristic credit waves continue, but with a most significant difference: the levels of credit usage keep creeping up from one recession to another and from one peak of the business cycle to the next. More and more, the overall economic levels during both recession and recovery are sustained by greater injections of credit by both government and private agencies. The significance of this development is twofold: it reflects a weakening of the base of the hitherto high level of economic performance; and it portends growing instability.

What has been happening is shown in Table 1. As can be seen in the first column of the table, the total net borrowing by business, farms, banks, consumers, and governmental bodies amounted to $38.5 billion in 1960. Last year, the

Table 1
Debt and Gross National Product

	(1) Net Additions to Public and Private Debt	*(2) Gross National Product*	*(3) Net Additions as a Percent of Gross National Product (Col. 1 ÷ Col. 2) x 100*
	— *Billions of $* —		
1960	38.5	506.0	7.6%
1965	78.1	688.1	11.4
1973	238.0	1,306.6	18.2
1974	209.2	1,412.9	14.8
1975	196.5	1,528.8	12.9
1976	265.3	1,706.5	15.5
1977	378.3	1,889.6	20.0

SOURCE: Data on debt from Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, *Flow of Funds Accounts 1946-1975* and *Flow of Funds Accounts 4th Quarter 1977*. Data on Gross National Product from *Survey of Current Business*, various issues.

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figure reached $378.3 billion. This almost tenfold increase is of course partly the result of inflation. A more meaningful measure of the enlarged role of credit is therefore given in the third column, where each year's increase in debt is compared with the same year's Gross National Product. Here we note that net additions to public and private debt rose from less than 8 percent of GNP in 1960 to over 18 percent in 1973. It is true that 1960 was a year when the credit cycle was in a downward phase, but even when we compare the 1973 peak (prior to the recent recession) with a preceding peak year such as 1965, we find a whopping increase of 60 percent—that is, from the 11.4 percent of GNP in 1965 to the 18.2 percent in 1973.

Striking as these changes are, they are merely a prelude to the unprecedented debt pattern of the current business cycle. The data in the third column of Table 1 for the period 1974-1977 show that even in the years of declining credit use, the low in 1975 (12.9 percent of GNP) was 70 percent above the figure for the recession year of 1960. Now let us look at the data for 1977—the third year of recovery from the 1974 recession. In the normal course of events we would of course expect an increase in the use of credit during such an expanding phase of the business cycle. The whole recovery, however, was unusually feeble: the understated official rate of unemployment averaged out as much as 7 percent and capital investment remained below the preceding 1973 peak. Yet this faltering recovery was based on a new high in the use of credit, reaching 20 percent of GNP in 1977!

Significantly, the government's contribution to this ever-expanding prop to a weakening economy has been crucial. Various financial devices, such as secondary mortgage markets and intermediate credit agencies guaranteed by the federal government, have from time to time been introduced or expanded with a view to supporting and facilitating loans to private enterprise. In addition, the Federal Reserve Board has used its position as lender of last resort to back up the banks whenever they seemed in danger of getting into trouble because of excessive credit creation. And finally there has been the manipulation of the public debt itself.

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As can be seen in Table 2, the share of the total deb accounted for by government borrowing has been persistent ly growing. For example, in the 1974 recession it accounte for 24.4 percent as compared with 10.4 percent in the re cession year of 1960. Even more striking is the enormous anc unusual participation of government debt during the first yea of recovery (56 percent in 1975), a complement to the very substantial contraction of the private debt that year. Yet even such an "electric shock" (a more than doubling of public debt from 1974 to 1975) was hardly adequate to keep up the momentum. But with private debt leaping forward in 1976 and 1977, economic activity did keep moving ahead, but not without continuing heavy doses of public debt only slightly below that of the peak year 1975. In other words, heavy government deficit financing has moved far beyond its "Keynesian" assignment of moderating the downward swing of the business cycle or initiating an upturn. In the present period of stagnation, government deficit financing has shown itself to be essential not only in combating the slump but also in sustaining the recovery during its entire course.

The atypical nature of the current recovery shows up not only in the growing reliance on government debt, but in the

Table 2
Public vs. Private Debt

	Net Additions to Public Debt		*Net Additions to Private Debt*	
	Billions of $	*Percent of Total*	*Billions of $*	*Percent of Total*
1960	4.0	10.4%	34.5	89.6%
1965	11.9	15.2	66.2	84.8
1973	41.4	17.4	196.6	82.6
1974	51.1	24.4	158.1	75.6
1975	110.1	56.0	86.4	44.0
1976	102.2	38.5	163.1	61.5
1977	107.7	28.5	270.6	71.5

NOTE: Data obtained from same source as given in Table 1. Public debt includes borrowing by state and local governments, the federal government, and U.S. government-sponsored credit agencies and mortgage pools. Private debt includes borrowing by consumers and financial and nonfinancial business firms.

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peculiar behavior of private debt as well. This we can observe in Table 3, where an impressive difference between the rise in consumer and business debt is recorded. The increase in consumer debt in 1977 was 67 percent higher than in 1973, the previous peak year; while the corresponding figure for business debt between the same two years was only 18 percent. If we adjust for the influence of inflation, however, we discover that the net new business debt in 1977 was in fact 17 percent *below* that of 1973, while the rise in real net consumer debt was 25 percent *higher*.*

The relative sluggishness in the growth of private business debt is undoubtedly a reflection of the excess capacity built up during the long postwar boom. In the third year of the recovery from the 1974 recession, manufacturing industries were still operating at only slightly above 82 percent of capacity, according to Federal Reserve Board estimates. And it is therefore not surprising to find that 1977 business investment in plant and equipment had not yet returned to the previous peak. In the light of this poor performance of capital investment, industrial

Table 3
Net Additions to Debt in Private Nonfinancial Sectors

	Consumers	*Business*	*Consumers*	*Business*
	— Billions of $ —		*— 1973 = 100 —*	
1973	78.0	87.3	100.0	100.0
1974	48.1	92.9	61.7	106.4
1975	47.5	37.4	60.9	42.8
1976	88.8	64.1	113.8	73.4
1977	130.0	103.1	166.7	118.1

NOTE: Data from same source as given in Table 1. Consumer debt includes residential mortgages and consumer credit. Business debt includes credit (other than trade credit) raised by corporations, farms, and nonfarm noncorporate firms.

* The adjustment for price changes was made by dividing the debt data by the relevant "implicit price deflators" used for the Department of Commerce's price-adjusted GNP estimates. These price figures are given in the *Survey of Current Business,* various issues. Note also that the total of consumer and business debt (columns 1 and 2) in Table 3 does not equal the figure for private debt in Table 2 (column 3). The reason is that the debt of financial institutions is included in Table 2 but not in Table 3.

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production as a whole could move ahead only under the impact of a sufficiently rapid rise of consumer demand. But given the persistence of mass unemployment and the existing distribution of income, consumer demand would require a very special stimulus to be able to play this role. The answer then had to be found in a major resurgence of consumer debt in the form of instalment credit and real estate mortgages.* And that, as shown in Table 3, is exactly what happened. In effect, then, the current business recovery has been bought on credit—primarily by a sizable increase in consumer borrowing piled on top of persistently heavy government debt creation.

Dependence on consumer debt for business expansion is of course not a new phenomenon. But what is new is the rapidly growing importance of this form of borrowing. As shown in Table 4, net additions to consumer debt increased as a percent of disposable income (that is, personal income after taxes) from

Table 4
Consumer Debt vs. Consumer Income

	(1) Net Additions to Consumer Debt	*(2) Consumer Disposable Income*	*(3) Net Additions as a Percent of Income*
	— Billions of $ —		*(Col. 1 ÷ Col. 2) x 100*
1960	17.6	349.4	5.0%
1965	29.0	472.2	6.1
1973	78.0	901.7	8.7
1974	48.1	984.6	4.9
1975	47.5	1,084.4	4.4
1976	88.8	1,185.8	7.5
1977	130.0	1,309.2	9.9

NOTE: Data from same sources as given in Table 1. Net additions to consumer debt include residential mortgages, installment credit, bank loans, and other forms of consumer credit. Disposable income is personal income after income taxes.

* The increase in mortgages is being used for more than new housing. Mortgage debt on *existing* homes tripled in less than three years, according to a *New York Times* dispatch of December 18, 1977. This means that homeowners have been adding to their mortgage debt, based on the inflated prices of residences, to help carry the load of higher prices of consumer goods and services, to repair their homes, to pay for college tuition, and to buy consumer durables.

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5 percent in 1960 to 8.7 percent in 1973 and then to almost 10 percent in 1977.

In part the rise in consumer debt is the result of the pressure of inflation on consumers. But one should not overlook the effects of aggressive salesmanship. A report in the *Wall Street Journal* (September 13, 1977) highlights efforts by banks to lure consumers to take out loans by offering attractive gifts to borrowers—such as electric sanders, watches, coffeemakers, and electric saws—and concludes: "Obviously times have changed in the financial world; more and more banks have become convinced that loans, like any other product, have to be marketed as aggressively as soap powder and cereal."

Even more extensive high-pressure sales campaigns have been conducted by banks to induce consumers to use automatic bank overdrafts and credit cards. Information is not available on the extent of overdraft borrowing, but we do know that instalment credit extended through the medium of bank credit cards grew from $13.9 billion in 1973 to $31.8 billion in 1977 (*Economic Indicators,* March 1978). There seems to be no end to the all-out promotion campaigns financial firms have been devising to create credit addiction. Currently, for example, Citibank is running a sweepstakes that promises 25,000 prizes to users of its credit cards; the chances of winning in the lottery increase with the number of times a card is used to make purchases.

All this ballyhoo was still not enough to overcome some major pockets of consumer resistance. The trouble was that rising interest rates and prices combined to produce monthly instalment payments higher than could be handled by otherwise potential customers. Nothing daunted, financial firms tackled this problem by stretching out the repayment schedules. Throughout the post-Second World War period the time for repayment of loans on autos (by far the largest single source of consumer credit) kept on being lengthened beyond the traditional 18 months. By 1974, thirty-six months became the standard maturity. But even this stretched-out repayment period proved insufficient to revive auto sales. Each year since 1974, more and more loans have exceeded the 36-month standard. In 1977, eighty-two percent of new-car loans were for three years,

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with one third of the loans running for four years, and some even for five. (Based on a survey by the American Bankers Association, as reported in the *Wall Street Journal,* September 28, 1977.)

The upshot of these diverse and strenuous efforts is shown in Table 5 where a comparison is made between the net additions to consumer credit and annual purchases of consumer durable goods. Here we zero in on consumer debt (other than residential mortgages) which for the most part is used to finance the purchase of durable goods, notably autos. (This is of course not to deny that some of the money raised by refinancing mortgages on old residences is also used for such purchases.) The significance of the particular comparison shown in Table 5 is that sales of consumer durables are major contributors to the up-and-down swings of the business cycle. And here once again—despite the fact that the data in the second column of the table tend to obscure the volatility of the quantity of sales of these products owing to the influence of rising prices—we can observe the dependence of the current recovery on debt. The substantial 47 percent increase in the value of consumer durables sold between 1974 and 1977 was supported by a 249 percent rise in net additions to consumer credit from $10.2 to $35.6 billion.

In analyzing this phenomenon it is essential to keep in mind that consumer debt in and of itself has a propensity to

Table 5
Consumer Credit and Consumer Durable Goods

	(1) Net Additions to Consumer Credit	*(2) Consumer Durable Goods Purchased*	*(3) Consumer Credit as a Percent of Durable Goods Purchased (Col. 1 ÷ Col. 2) x 100*
	— *Billions of* $ —		
1973	22.0	123.7	17.8%
1974	10.2	122.0	8.4
1975	9.4	132.9	7.1
1976	23.6	158.9	14.9
1977	35.6	179.8	19.8

NOTE: Data from same sources as given in Table 1. The first column includes instalment and other consumer credit; home mortgages and general bank loans are excluded.

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cyclical behavior, and that just as it has been a factor in pushing the economy up, it can be and usually is a factor in the downswing as well. The simplified hypothetical illustration in Table 6 is designed to help explain this point.

Let us assume that there is a steady creation of $90 billion additional consumer credit each year, that these loans have to be paid back in three equal annual instalments at the end of each year, and that interest charges are ten percent on the outstanding balance. If you will look at the first line of Table 6, you will see that since in the first year $90 billion is lent and $39 billion ($30 billion for repayment and $9 billion for interest) returned to the banks, the net contribution to consumer purchasing power is $51 billion. During the second year, the repayment on the first year's loan goes down to $36 billion, but there is also a flow-back of $39 billion on the second year's loan. Now, even though $90 billion is added to consumer purchasing power, the *net* positive stimulus to purchasing power declined from $51 billion in year one to $15 billion in year two. Following this process to its conclusion, we see that in the third year the continued creation of credit at the same rate results in an actual *reduction* of the total available consumer purchasing power.

Table 6
Hypothetical Illustration of the Effect of Consumer Credit on Purchasing Power

Assumptions: 1. $90 billion of loans are extended to consumers each year.
2. These loans are repaid in three equal annual instalments plus 10% interest on the outstanding balance.

Year	*(1) Consumer Loans Extended*	*(2) — Repayment on — 1st Year Debt*	*(3) 2nd Year Debt*	*(4) 3rd Year Debt*	*(5) Total Repayments*	*(6) Net Additions to Consumer Purchasing Power*
		(Billions of $)			*(2) + (3) + (4)*	*(1) — (5)*
1	90	39	—	—	39	51
2	90	36	39	—	75	15
3	90	33	36	39	108	−18

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What this example demonstrates is that steady additions to consumer credit contain the paradox that before long they will reduce instead of increase purchasing power.* The economy of course does not work so simply. The initial contribution to purchasing power generates additional production and employment, helping in this way to accelerate the economy on the way up. If there is little else to keep the recovery alive, however, the effect of this stimulus also peters out—*unless ever larger injections of credit are forthcoming*. But even this runs up against barriers, since there is a practical limit to how much consumers can pay out on instalment loans and mortgages and still meet their normal costs for food, rent, clothing, medical care, etc.

This innate cyclical nature of consumer credit is an important explanation of the extreme fluctuations shown in the first column of Table 5. Despite rising prices, and therefore the need for ever more credit just to keep on an even keel, net additions to consumer credit fell by almost 60 percent between 1973 and 1975. On the other hand, the sharp recovery in 1976 and 1977 provided the basis for the strong upturn in auto sales and the accompanying stimulus that a rise in auto production brings. But, as can be seen in the last column of the table, the upsurge of consumer credit was greater than the sales of consumer durables, and the contribution of consumer credit in this area in 1977 was even greater than it had been in the preceding peak year of 1973.

While there is no reliable way of forecasting precisely the course of events, the foregoing analysis points to a simple conclusion. To the extent that the current recovery rests on a continuous rise in consumer spending, mainly on durable goods, an *increasing* flow of consumer credit will be needed. But we have also seen that expanding consumer credit will eventually—and

* It should be noted that this paradox applies to *all* forms of private debt, though the details vary with the type of debt. In all cases the same features occur: the upward phase of the cycle is stimulated; ever larger injections of credit are needed to sustain the stimulus; at some point, because of the repayment requirements, the debt load cannot be increased sufficiently rapidly and the stimulating effect turns into the opposite; and finally reduction in the creation of new debt intensifies the downward swing of the cycle.

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sooner rather than later—turn back on itself as the stream of accompanying repayments grows inexorably larger.

One other implication of the foregoing analysis can stand emphasis. We called attention to the continuing importance of government deficit spending throughout the current upswing. As the time for a new recession nears—most observers of the business scene seem to think it will set in within a year at the outside—it will be interesting to see what policies the economic wizards inside and outside the government will prescribe as a way to turn things around again. With huge deficits needed even in the last year of a cyclical expansion, will they propose even larger ones to cope with the ensuing contraction? Or will they finally conclude that the jig is up and that capitalism must now at long last be allowed to go through the wringer of an old-fashioned depression of a kind they only recently thought was a thing of the past?

Time will tell. Meanwhile, as the situation becomes increasingly clear to those with eyes to see, the left has an opportunity unprecedented in the postwar period to win converts through the sheer force of convincing reason. The deepest contradictions of capitalism are surfacing in a way that has not happened since the 1930s, and the margin for reformist palliatives which existed four decades ago has been nearly used up. The manipulators and regulators of the system have had their day; the time has come to raise the banner of socialism, not as a utopia or panacea, but as a scientific explanation of the crisis of the system and the only possible way forward.

Is it necessary to add that this does *not* mean renouncing concrete struggles to wring from the ruling class what is needed to meet the urgent and in all too many cases desperate needs of tens of millions of people in the developed capitalist countries and hundreds of millions in the underdeveloped Third World? These struggles will not change the nature of capitalism, but they can force concessions and in so doing prepare the way and educate to the need for the still greater struggles that lie ahead.

(May 15, 1978)

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THE ERITREAN STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

BY LINDA HEIDEN

On December 31, 1976, fighters of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) attacked Ethiopia's fuel depot at the occupied port of Massawa and set ablaze 45 million liters of fuel, calling it "our flaming torch of welcome for 1977."

The year proved well worthy of their greeting. Over the next 12 months, Ethiopia's grip on Eritrea was reduced from control over a portion of the countryside and all towns and villages of consequence to occupation of just three major cities and a handful of isolated garrisons. At the same time, the Front achieved impressive political, social, and economic gains in the liberated areas.

Yet their military and social achievements at home have not met with corresponding support from abroad. As the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia enters its most decisive stage, confusion regarding the nature of the struggle and the forces involved persists among many outsiders. Is the war simply one more imperialist plot to further divide the region's peoples and

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Linda Heiden is a Midwest-based free-lance journalist who has done extensive work around political issues in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

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re-establish control over the Horn of Africa? Or is it, as the Eritreans maintain, a genuine people's liberation struggle fighting to establish an independent and self-reliant people's democratic republic? What forces are at work inside the movement? What is the nature of the Ethiopian regime they face? The answers to these questions are rooted in the historical development of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Historical Background of the Conflict

Prior to Italian colonization of Eritrea, present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea consisted of a hodgepodge of feudal principalities and fiefdoms encompassing numerous nationalities, but lacking a centralizing political-economic authority. As European powers scrambled for control of Africa, Italy emerged victorious in Eritrea, integrating the area as we define it today under one political-economic entity for the first time.

Under Italian rule (1889-1941), feudal Eritrea was restructured to fill the needs of a cash-based colonial economy. Italian manufactures began undercutting locally produced goods, throwing local craftworkers and artisans out of work and discouraging development of local industry. At the same time, many of the richest feudal landholdings were seized and divided among Italian colonists, forcing thousands of peasants off the land, into the nascent urban centers, and into contact with other Eritrean nationalities on a mass scale for the first time. A multinational Eritrean proletariat* began to emerge as this jobless labor force was put to work building an infrastructural base for the Italian conquest of eastern Africa.

Early attempts at organizing against oppressive working conditions, military conscription, and racial discrimination under the Italians grew into a full-scale independence movement under the British, who reneged on their wartime pledge of supporting Eritrean independence, seized power from the defeated Italians at the height of the Second World War, and established a military administration. Eritrea's first nationalist political parties were founded during the 11-year period of British rule

* That is, a proletariat which integrated workers of the country's nine different nationalities into one force.

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(1941-1952). A rapidly growing movement of rallies, demonstrations, and workers' strikes around both economic and political issues was met with escalating repression and violence. By 1952 trade-union organizing, begun at individual factories around economic issues, had grown into the General Union of Labor Syndicates. One of the earliest trade unions in Africa, its central purpose was to develop the political struggle for independence.

In short, the period of European colonial rule forged an emerging multi-national Eritrean proletariat and a national consciousness among the masses as a whole, and became a unifying motive force for struggle.

During the same period Ethiopia underwent a very different political-economic process. While Italy began the transformation of Eritrea's independent fiefdoms into a multinational, capitalist-dominated colony during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Emperor Haile Selassie and his predecessors expanded their control over the weaker principalities to the south and east and, through the boundless self-interested benevolence of British and U.S. imperialism, consolidated feudal hegemony over the area. Class struggle in Ethiopia continued to be characterized by isolated, sporadic peasant revolts against local feudal overlords until the mid-1960s.

Thus, Eritrea and Ethiopia developed as quite separate political-economic entities, each with its own class contradictions and internal dynamic. But unlike Western policy in other Italian colonies which were granted independence in the early 1950s, U.S., British, and Ethiopian interests conspired to subject Eritrea to an Ethiopian-controlled "federation." Speaking before the United Nations Security Council in 1952, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles made the absolute domination of U.S. interests in the area explicit.

> From the point of view of justice, the opinions of the Eritrean people must receive consideration. Nevertheless, the strategic interest of the United States in the Red Sea basin and considerations of security and world peace make it necessary that the country has to be linked with our ally, Ethiopia.[1]*

* Numbered notes will be found at the end of the article.

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As a result Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia in September 1952 through a UN mandate in which the Eritreans had no voice.[2] Eritrea was to retain control over internal affairs, but Ethiopia would have jurisdiction over foreign commerce and defense. The deal provided land-locked, still-feudal Ethiopia with two major Red Sea ports, the highly productive agricultural highlands, and Asmara's nascent industrial development. "Internal stability" under Ethiopia's feudal rulers was guaranteed under the Mutual Defense Pact signed with the United States in 1953. In return, the United States received formal rights to establish military bases throughout Eritrea.*

Clearly, Ethiopia's feudal autocracy could not coexist alongside Eritrea's emerging bourgeois democracy. Within weeks of the federation accord, Ethiopia began moves to assert outright colonial control over Eritrea, in blatant disregard of its UN mandate. In an attempt to build the Ethiopian economy and crush the Eritrean labor movement, whole industrial centers were dismantled and transferred to Addis Ababa. By 1962 all political parties and trade unions, freedom of speech and assembly, newspapers, and national languages had been banned. The parliament was closed, the constitution abolished. Eritrea was declared the fourteenth province of Ethiopia.

Resistance to these measures, built upon the experience of decades of anti-Italian and anti-British organizing, grew rapidly into a massive movement against the Ethiopian occupation. In March 1958 Eritrean workers, supported by the other patriotic classes, staged a militant four-day general strike and massive demonstrations, paralyzing every major city in the country in protest against Ethiopia's colonial oppression. The Ethiopian government called out its troops, killing 88 workers and wounding 453 others. The bitter outcome of this peaceful protest led to the beginning of armed struggle, with the formation of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1961, fourteen months before Ethiopia's formal annexation of the area.

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* One of these was Kagnew Station, the world's largest communications base outside the United States, which served to monitor broadcasts from liberation groups and socialist nations throughout the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia.

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Internal Forces

The ELF was conceived and organized strictly as a nationalist group, led by feudalists and members of the growing national bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie. The objectives of the struggle, beyond independence, were not outlined in a clear program. Fighting was sporadic, with little unified military strategy or coherent political analysis behind it.

By 1966 internal contradictions began to surface as the Front's more progressive elements began agitating to end class privilege within the movement. In response, the ELF leadership launched a liquidation campaign which escalated to all-out civil war when three groups of progressives split and formed the EPLF in 1970. A cease-fire was finally declared in 1974 following organized mass protest by the civilian population and from within the ELF ranks.

Today, virtually the entire country is in the hands of the two liberation fronts, with the few remaining Ethiopian strongholds under siege. Internally, however, the liberation movement continues to be divided by increasingly well-defined, contradictory class forces whose differences materialize in the fronts' respective post-liberation programs, in their organization and administration of the liberated areas, in their relations with foreign powers, and in the emergence of a so-called "third force" headed by Osman Sabbe.

The immediate program of the ELF calls for military victory over Ethiopia, with the economic, political, and social transformation of Eritrean society to follow. Serious attempts to begin implementing this transformation have yet to be undertaken in ELF-controlled areas. Instead, property nationalized by the Ethiopian regime has been returned to its former owners, and land reform is discussed only in the vaguest of terms.[3] Little effort has been put into the development of mass organizations. Yet without a politically conscious, well-organized mass base, the principle of self-reliance cannot be implemented. The ELF in fact rejects the principle, saying that countries which have won national liberation "cannot solve their internal and external problems on their own by following the principle of 'self-reliance.' "[4] Instead, they place primary emphasis on external support, particularly from Syria, Sudan, Iraq, and vari-

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ous other Arab regimes. The ELF's program and practice thus reflect the class interests of its leadership.

Like the ELF, the EPLF's immediate goal is victory over Ethiopian colonialism. But the EPLF believes that the areas liberated during the armed struggle must provide a basis for the new society to follow, and it emphasizes the necessity of self-reliance as a means of ensuring the gains of the revolution:

> Self-reliance is a question of political line. . . . [It means] that relying on one's own efforts is primary and decisive, while outside aid is secondary . . . reliance on outside support opens the door wide . . . to undue pressure and interference and paves the way to dependence. What is more dangerous, it encourages isolation from the masses, indifference to their needs and attitudes. . . . Self-reliance assures the active role and participation of the masses, develops their self-confidence and guarantees that they become and remain masters of their revolution and country.[5]

Eritreans organized both inside and outside the country supply the EPLF with the bulk of its needed supplies, and the Front has begun raising a small amount of foreign exchange through the sale of salt and other products. In military affairs, they have implemented the slogan "Destroy the Enemy with His Own Guns and Bullets" so successfully that today virtually their entire fighting force is armed with weapons captured from Ethiopian troops.

Internationally, EPLF's closest ties are with the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), the Tigrai People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman. Other partisan fronts and independent states including Guinea-Bissau and Algeria have also expressed public and private support for the struggle as a whole. Kuwait has provided limited amounts of food and medical supplies to relief associations with ties to both ELF and EPLF.

Both in the liberated areas and in the urban centers still under occupation, EPLF gives highest priority to political education and mobilization. Mass associations of workers, peasants, youth, students, women, and petty bourgeois elements have been organized in clandestine cells in Ethiopian-held areas and through open mass work throughout EPLF-liberated territory.

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At the same time, land reform aimed at the abolition of local feudal and foreign capitalist control of the economy is providing an economic base for equality among the rural population. As these processes begin to take effect, local elections and militia are organized, providing peasants and workers the opportunity to run their own communities for the first time.

Land reform has also opened the way for the reorganization of the agricultural sector from cash crops for export toward self-sufficiency in food production. Price controls are being implemented in the markets and shops while production and commerce as a whole are being restructured away from a profit-making orientation toward serving the needs of the working population and liberation forces. Transportation, medical, and educational systems run by the Front are providing vital social services to the rural population throughout the liberated areas for the first time.

One of the best measures of revolutionary progress under EPLF is the social advances achieved by women. Under the slogan "Equality through Equal Participation in Revolution and Social Production," chapters of the Association of Eritrean Women (AEW) are being organized by EPLF women cadre throughout the liberated areas and in underground cells in enemy territory. The AEW's highest priority is political education and mobilization to fight both the traditional feudal culture and the imperialist and colonial control that have enforced it, maintaining the oppression of Eritrean women for centuries. Today, women from all parts of the country are participating in every aspect of the revolution. More than one third of the EPLF fighting forces are women. A conscious effort to eradicate the economic underpinnings of sex discrimination is resulting in the integration of women into virtually every sector of the economy, from machine design and repair to public administration.

The National Democratic program adopted at the First National Congress of the EPLF (January 21-30, 1977) formalizes these changes into a plan for the development of a free Eritrean society. Adopted at a congress where for the first time Eritrean peasants and workers predominated, the plan's significance lies not only in the tremendous changes it seeks to implement, but in its successes in doing so to date.

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A "Crucial Task"—Forming a United Patriotic Front

The EPLF characterizes the present stage of the liberation struggle as that of national democratic revolution, in which the objective is to free Eritrea from imperialist and colonial domination. A crucial task at this stage, says EPLF, is the formation of a united front encompassing all patriotic classes and built with the conscious participation of the masses. But the development of such a front has been complicated by growing class contradictions within the movement, and by reactionary foreign interests seeking a neocolonial "solution" for the struggle. These contradictions and imperialist interests merge in the form of a so-called "third force," Osman Sabbe's ELF-PLF.*

Since Sabbe's ouster from the EPLF, pro-Iraqui elements within the ELF leadership have pushed for reunification with Sabbe. Informed observers report that at least one third of the ELF's forces have left the front or were killed in the resulting protests over this and other issues. The ELF has been further weakened by a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Dergue near Adi Kaieh in September. Bitter villagers, whose homes and fields were subsequently looted and destroyed by the Ethiopian forces, blame the defeat on ELF's refusal to accept EPLF military assistance in the fighting. ELF has engaged in few battles since then. Their defeat and desertion of the villagers, together with their attempts at building a close relationship with Sabbe, the lack of democratic practice within the Front, and the increasingly clear-cut differences between ELF and EPLF mass work, have cost ELF much support among both its fighters and the civilian population.

These changes in the internal balance of forces have left the ELF leadership in an increasingly untenable position. If they were to drop all pretense of trying to gain popular support

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* Osman Sabbe and a small group of followers split with the ELF in 1970 as a result of a personal power struggle within the ELF leadership. A tactical alliance between EPLF and Sabbe, who represented the Front abroad, broke down in March 1976 after Sabbe attempted to blackmail EPLF into changing several of its key principles. The ELF-PLF, consisting of some 2,000 refugees recruited and headed by Sabbe and financed by Saudi Arabia and other U.S. allies, has since tried unsuccessfully to gain a foothold inside Eritrea.

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and unite with Sabbe, they would face further isolation from the fighters and masses; given Sabbe's much stronger external ties, Machiavellian history, and vacillating commitment to even nominal Eritrean independence, their chances of wielding effective political control over such an alliance to ensure their own interests would not be favorable. To remain aloof from both Sabbe's group and the EPLF, on the other hand, would mean continued isolation and almost certain defeat in the event of an ELF-targeted offensive. Under these conditions, ELF leaders have finally been forced to agree to EPLF's proposal for an ELF/EPLF united front.

Under the political principles of the accord signed last October, amplified in March, and implemented April 24, the two groups agree on full Eritrean independence; on opposition to colonialism, world imperialism, zionism, and internal reaction; on safeguarding the democratic rights of the masses; and on strengthening solidarity with progressive forces and liberation movements. The united front is to operate through joint committees which will coordinate military, social, and economic affairs, propaganda, and foreign relations under a joint leadership. This leadership's duties also include conducting "any negotiations that may be made" with the Dergue (Amharic for "committee," the name chosen by Ethiopia's ruling military council). Both ELF and EPLF retain the right to separate political and organizational work and independence. Sabbe's group has been ordered to close its small office in Agordat and disband.[6]

EPLF has no illusions about the nature of the force with which they have allied. The ELF leadership pursues independence to further its own class interests, and can be expected to oppose in practice the social transformations necessary in the second stage of the struggle. But in the present stage of national democratic revolution, they constitute an ally. This alliance itself should work to the EPLF's advantage by offering the civilian population a chance to compare the programs and policies of the two fronts.

"Socialist Revolution" Under the Dergue

As the struggle inside Eritrea has grown and developed,

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likewise conditions within Ethiopia itself have changed. By mid-1974 the Selassie regime had begun to crumble under the weight of massive workers' and students' strikes and demonstrations, mutinies in the armed forces, the pressures of the colonial war in Eritrea, and a devastating drought that left more than 100,000 dead in the northwest provinces. A massive, spontaneous, popular movement emerged, undermining and ultimately shattering the regime's very foundations, but lacking a strong, well-organized revolutionary organization capable of seizing state power. In September 1974, the self-proclaimed Marxist military council known as the Dergue formally stepped into the power vacuum, deposing the archaic feudal autocracy and declaring a "socialist revolution."

The Dergue's claim to revolution rests primarily on the nationalization of selected profit-making enterprises, on an agrarian reform based on the expropriation of large landholdings, on the establishment of various mass organizations, and on a proclaimed break with Western imperialist powers.

On December 20, 1974, the Dergue announced the nationalization of 101 business concerns. Most of these were non-industrial monopolies owned by the feudal aristocracy. The few multinational interests affected were encouraged to maintain minority holdings and were promised compensation in full for expropriated assets. New investments were also encouraged under the plan, which continues in effect to date.

The Dergue's land-reform program was announced on March 4, 1975, in the wake of massive land takeovers by peasants throughout Ethiopia. Since the declaration, feudal control over some rural areas has been significantly reduced, but control over marketing and access to draft animals, farm implements, and supplies remains in traditional hands in most outlying regions. Whether even the limited successes of the reform can be credited to the Dergue, however, is a question which can be evaluated only in light of the prevailing social forces and conditions of the period.

By the time the military council assumed power in September 1974, the feudal class was already fragmented and weak, while the rising mass movement had united around a minimum program of "Land to the Tiller." Peasant groups in many areas

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were taking matters into their own hands, ridding themselves of their feudal overlords, and instituting their own land redistribution programs. Clearly, no social force could hope to maintain itself in power without instituting some type of major land redistribution program, necessarily undermining the base of the feudal oligarchy's power. Thus, it was primarily the push of the revolutionary forces from below which forced the Dergue to take immediate anti-feudalist measures.

This is not to say that the Dergue is pro-feudalist. On the contrary, the military council is composed predominantly of petty bourgeois for whom the continued absolute rule of the feudalists represents a class impediment. Nonetheless, it was the mass movement of workers, peasants, and students, rather than leadership exerted by the military, which made the dismantling of feudal hegemony an immediate necessity. Indeed, the Dergue's primary method of implementing the program involved scattering high school and university students and teachers throughout the countryside in a hastily conceived plan that seemed better suited to dispersing a key opposition group than to implementing a major social transformation.[7] Since the Dergue has made no serious attempt at providing political education for the peasantry, the rich peasants—seeds of an Ethiopion national bourgeoisie—gained control of the peasant associations, and have been the primary beneficiaries of the agrarian reform.

Like its nationalization and agrarian-reform programs, the Dergue's mass organizations look better on paper than in practice. The overwhelming aim of these groups is directed at mobilization for the internal and external war effort, largely around national-chauvinist and anti-Arab nationalist slogans. Peasant militia, for example, are supposedly organized to protect the "achievements of the agrarian revolution," but usually find themselves transported from their fields to the Eritrean front to fight "Arab invaders," "petro-dollar agents," and "feudalists" under the slogan "Ethiopia first." Similarly, while the Dergue organizes women's associations to support its military undertakings, more than 100,000 of Addis Ababa's two million people still earn their living through prostitution after four years of "socialist revolution."[8]

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The Dergue's claim to socialist revolution is further eroded by its liquidationist policies toward its real and imagined critics on the left. While claiming that a proletarian party will soon emerge to lead the "revolution," the Dergue's leaders have instigated and carried out wave after wave of "red terror," the increasingly clear objective of which is to obliterate all leftist groups and individuals capable of establishing such a party. Within months of seizing state power, the military council imprisoned or executed virtually the entire leadership of the labor and student movements.[9] The Dergue's much vaunted urban neighborhood associations, known as *kebeles,* have escalated the terror campaign. They were aided in their mission by the Mei Sone Party, until even the Mei Sone fell victim to the Dergue's attacks once the party began gaining significant support among sectors of the military and the civilian population.[10] The only above-ground force remaining is Seded, a party founded and heavily dominated by the Dergue leadership itself.

An EPLF spokesperson explains what the Dergue's rise to power has meant for the Eritrean people:

> In Eritrea, the Dergue has operated under the slogan, "To Kill the Fish, Dry Up the Sea"—to destroy the liberation forces, liquidate their civilian base. . . . Ever since the military regime came into power, it has put forward the slogan, "Peaceful Solution to the Eritrean Problem," while at the same time carrying out a campaign of genocide against our people.[11]

The Dergue's administration in Eritrea has been marked by a massive escalation in the use of free-fire zones and napalm, and incidents of gang rape, physical mutilation, arbitrary arrest and torture, and other atrocities. More than two hundred villages throughout the country have been wiped out by My-Lai-type massacres and bombardment. These atrocities have not abated in the face of Cuban, Soviet, South Yemeni, and other international alliances with the Dergue. On the contrary, Soviet-supplied planes have carried out continuous bomb and napalm air attacks against Keren, Dekamhare, and several other large urban and agricultural centers since early January. Since there are no Ethiopian troops for whom these attacks might serve as air support anywhere in the area, the bombings can only be regarded as vengeful acts of terrorism.

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Shifting International Alliances

Ethiopia had been an unquestioning Western ally since the 1940s, receiving military and economic aid from the United States equal to that received by the rest of Africa as a whole. But continuous attacks by Eritrean liberation forces rendered U.S. bases "insecure" and by the mid-1970s they had been all but phased out, replaced by larger facilities at Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the Selassie regime's successors were beginning to feel the contradiction between their proclamation of "socialist revolution" on the one hand, and their continued full-scale political, economic, and military relations with the United States on the other. By late 1976 the alliance was no longer so appealing to either side.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union saw an opportunity to establish itself in Ethiopia, a country whose size, geographic location, and 30 million population make it a potentially vitally important ally on the African continent. This opportunity coincided, moreover, with an attempt by the U.S.-backed Arab regimes in the region to squeeze the Soviets out of the Red Sea altogether through the establishment of the Red Sea Security Pact.[12] The Soviets' only hope for establishing port-of-call rights—much less military and economic agreements—along the 1,400-mile route lay in Ethiopia's colony, Eritrea. This posed a major problem: if the Soviets were to ally themselves with Ethiopia, they risked seriously damaging their strong ties with Somalia. Support for Somalia's claim to the Ogaden and Eritrea's liberation struggle, on the other hand, might seriously jeopardize their relations with other African countries, which see support for the Eritrean struggle and Somali claims as a breach of the OAU charter.[13] The Eritrean forces, dominated by EPLF and its strict line of self-reliance, moreover, were much less likely to embrace a strong military/economic pact with the USSR than was the Dergue, which has never put forth such a policy.

In December 1976, Soviet officials signed a secret arms agreement with Ethiopia. Within a short time, they began promoting a distorted history of the area as proof of Ethiopia's "just claim" to Eritrea, and began to argue that, because of Western imperialist threats to the area, Eritrea should give up

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the liberation struggle and enter into a vaguely defined semi-autonomous relationship with Ethiopia. Subsequent attempts by the Cuban government to mediate Ethiopia's disputes with the Somalis and the Eritreans proved futile. Western observers say at least $1 billion worth of Soviet-bloc arms have been shipped to the Dergue since then, and at least four Soviet gunships have taken a direct role in the fighting along the coast.[14]

Beyond the USSR, the Ethiopian regime's most important ally is Cuba.* Since his March 1977 visit to Addis Ababa, Fidel Castro has given absolute political support to the Dergue, and reportedly has deployed some 17,000 combat and military-support personnel there, many of whom fought on the Somali front. According to an EPLF communique of February 27, 2,000 Cuban troops provided heavy artillery support for Ethiopian forces in an unsuccessful attempt to break the siege of Asmara earlier that month. More Cuban troops have been flown into the city since then.

What Kind of International Solidarity?

As this paper goes to press, the Dergue controls just six positions in Eritrea. With much of the Dergue's regular and peasant forces demoralized, disillusioned, and lacking the training needed to operate their sophisticated Soviet weaponry, it is clear that only a massive intervention by foreign troops, solidly backed by heavy artillery and aerial bombardments, can offer any hope of regaining even nominal Ethiopian control over the country.

At this juncture, the Dergue and many of its supporters draw supposed parallels between Cuba's principled backing of MPLA in Angola against imperialist-backed forces, and possible Cuban support for the Dergue against the Eritreans. The nature and alignment of forces in Eritrea, however, are fundamentally different from those in Angola. EPLF, with the solid backing of the Eritrean masses, with a clear democratic line,

* Others include Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Libya, South Yemen, and Yugoslavia, Israel has maintained its long-time economic ties and military assistance while the United States has reopened credit channels and OK'd delivery of previously purchased "non-lethal weaponry."

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and with the foundations of an independent and self-reliant people's democratic republic already laid, is a far stronger and more determined force than Holden Roberto's FNLA or South African-backed UNITA could ever hope to be. At the same time, the forces which have seized power and proclaimed a "revolution" in Ethiopia constitute a petty bourgeois military clique with no direct link with the masses and with a liquidationist policy toward those forces capable of generating such a link. The continuing ties between the United States, Israel, and the Dergue, together with aid supplied to Osman Sabbe, clearly represent a carefully hedged effort by the Western imperialist camp to regain hegemony over the area by attempting to establish influence among, and ultimately control over, those forces capable of being compromised. To ignore these maneuvers and instead condemn the EPLF-led revolution itself as an imperialist plot can only be regarded as the grossest distortion of reality.

The EPLF holds the towns and villages most likely to come under direct fire by a full-scale Ethiopian offensive, and has no significant foreign support. But it is the only organization with a highly organized, solid base among the Eritrean masses; it has been strengthened through its policy of self-reliance, and is clearly capable of waging protracted armed struggle.

"Internal strength is decisive, not external support," affirms an EPLF cadre. "This is true of the struggle for independence, and it will be true after as well when we are challenged by those who want to take over our victory and by those who want to force us back under Ethiopian domination."[15]

It is surely one of history's most bitter ironies to find Cuba and South Yemen, alongside the USSR and the Ethiopian Dergue, challenging EPLF to prove the point.

NOTES

1. Quoted in "Ethiopia Summary," *Market International Report* (January 1977).
2. For a detailed discussion of the negotiations leading to the federation agreement, see AESNA and AEWNA, *In Defense of the Eritrean Revolution* (1978), pp. 48-56.
3. "Organizing by the EPLF in Keren," Liberation News Service (Dec. 16, 1977), no. 892; and "ELF Political Program," adopted May 22, 1975.

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4. *Ghedli Hizbet Eritrea* (ELF organ) (November, 1976), no. 16.
5. "Self Reliance—Only Way to Victory," *Liberation* (July-August, 1977), vol. 6, no. 6, pp. 7-8.
6. *Eritrea in Struggle* (May 1978), vol. 2, no. 8.
7. The Ethiopian student movement was a leading force in the mass movement, and played a crucial role through propaganda and agitation among the people.
8. Addis Ababa Mayor Alemu Ababe in "Is the Terror Really Red?" *Seven Days* (March 10, 1978), vol. 2, no. 3, p. 19.
9. The Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU) was one of the primary forces leading to Selassie's demise. Their general strike, called in March 1974, brought promises for the first time in Ethiopian history of a minimum wage, pensions, health care, the right to strike, etc.
10. The Mei Sone gave "critical support" to the Dergue until "government moves to play down class struggle, [and] to release imprisoned feudal leaders" resulted in a split, armed fighting and several hundred deaths late last year. *Africa News* (Oct. 17, 1977), vol. 9, no. 16, p. 2.
11. Interview with Amdemicael Kahsai, member of the Central Committee of the EPLF, Sept. 10, 1977.
12. The United States and Saudi Arabia have wooed Sudan and Egypt out of their once close relations with the USSR and are now proposing a tightly constructed political/military bloc known as the Red Sea Security Pact. With the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) dominated by the Saudis, the grouping needs only Eritrea to turn the Red Sea into a "lake of imperialist hegemony," threatening every progressive force in the Middle East and eastern Africa.
13. One of the OAU's most fundamental principles underlines the "inviolability of existing state borders" as defined under European colonialism. Aimed at secessionist movements, the principle has been wrongly applied to Eritrea, which was integrated for the first time under Italian colonialism and retains the same distinct identity today under Ethiopian occupation.
14. *Manchester Guardian* (Jan. 19, 1978).
15. *Baltimore Sun* (Dec. 30, 1977).

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SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND NORTHERN IRELAND, 1964-1970:
THE ORIGINS OF THE PRESENT STRUGGLE

BY MARY TURNER

The current stage of the Irish struggle for independence began in 1967 with a civil-rights campaign; less than two years later, in August 1969, British troops were sent into action, and a year later they were meeting armed resistance from the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). Conflict between the British government and the Catholic people of the North has been sustained ever since. The government responsible for sending in the troops was in the hands of the Labour party. The Ulster crisis confronted the Labour party with a classic dilemma: how to relate their reformist tradition to their commitment to the economic framework of capitalism and the imperial interests it generates. The fundamental contradiction of these aims and the consequent bankruptcy of the social democrats' reformism was clearly demonstrated as the crisis developed.

The Ulster version of the contradiction was particularly acute. Ulster existed as an expression of imperial power. The six northern counties of Ireland, the historic province of Ulster,

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were the territory the British were able to hold on to in 1921 after the Irish liberation war. The partition of Ireland left the British with the important shipbuilding and industrial center of Belfast and the harbor at Derry (Londonderry to the British). Partition was possible because in these counties the Protestant working class, descendants of the Protestants sent to hold Catholic Ireland for the British in the seventeenth century, outnumbered the Catholics by two to one and had been carefully nurtured in traditions of loyalty to the British Crown. Leaders of Irish independence movements, from the eighteenth-century United Irishmen to the early twentieth-century Socialist party of Ireland founded by James Connolly, tried consistently to eliminate the religious sectarian division. But, in 1921 Britain retained its Protestant garrison in the North.

The political instrument of British power was the Unionist party which bound the Protestant working class by superpatriotism to the Protestant bourgeoisie. To keep their allegiance, the British allowed the Unionists a monopoly of political power in Ulster. They were the white settlers holding the frontier province against the rebellious natives to the South and within the border. Northern Ireland was equipped with a miniature parliament, called Stormont (the name of its meeting place), and, in addition, sent 12 Members of Parliament to the British House of Commons. Constitutionally, ultimate authority lay with Westminster but the Unionists were left to run Northern Ireland. In the House of Commons a tradition was firmly established that the "just prerogatives" of Stormont prevented even discussion of Ulster's problems. The Unionists secured themselves in power. Gerrymandered constituencies blocked the development of any parliamentary-style opposition in Stormont and kept local government firmly Unionist. This provided a legal constitutional façade for the government of what was in fact a police state.

The partition of Ireland and its persistently high unemployment rates guaranteed that Catholic resistance would continue. The Irish Republican Army, founded in 1919 to resist the British, continued sporadically to assert itself. The activities of the IRA and its supporters provided justification for the Special

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Powers Act, introduced as emergency legislation in 1922, which remains, in essentials, in force at this moment. The Special Powers Act determined, in the words of one observer, that "the Home Secretary shall have powers to do what he likes, or else let somebody else do what he likes for him." The police force which implemented these dictatorial powers, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was armed, Protestant, and could be supplemented at any time by the B-Specials, Protestant citizens acting as militia. Overlapping with the Unionist party and the RUC were the Orange Lodges, social organizations strengthening Protestant political élan by keeping the sense of Protestant superiority alive at the grass roots. Every year on July 12 and August 12 the Protestant population joined in ceremonial marches to celebrate the historic victories won by the Protestant troops of the English King William of Orange (William III) in 1689 and 1690 over the rebel Catholics, and to assert the perpetuation of Protestant political supremacy. The Catholic minority became Ulster's "niggers," deprived of political representation, repressed by coercive laws, and consequently discriminated against in housing, education, and above all employment.

The Labour government which took office in October 1964 was widely expected both by reformers in Northern Ireland and by some of its own MPs to take action on behalf of the Catholics. A whole program of civil-rights reform had been worked out by the trade unions and was supported by the Northern Ireland Labour party, the Communist party, and a new nonparty middle-class Campaign for Social Justice. The program was essential to the practice of parliamentary democracy and challenged the social democrats to implement the principles they claimed to serve. The Labour party also paid a political price for the repression of the Catholic minority; the Ulster Unionist MPs at Westminster supported the Conservatives. More immediately, during the 1964 election campaign which brought the Labour party to office, the Northern Ireland problem was thrust into unusual prominence by the worst sectarian riots in Belfast since the depression in the 1930s.

The riots marked the emergence of new political influences on the left and the right. The Royal Ulster Constabulary, armed with Sten guns, revolvers, and riot equipment, and backed up

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by armored cars, attacked a Republican party headquarters for illegally displaying the Irish flag. Thirty people, including eighteen RUC men, received hospital treatment. The attack was prompted by the Reverend Ian Paisley, leader since the 1950s of a militantly anti-Catholic movement, drawing working-class support and based on his Presbyterian Free Church. It was directed against the newly formed, Marxist-oriented Republican party, which was campaigning for the peaceful formation of a united socialist Ireland. Both the Catholic minority (35 percent of the population in 1961) and the Protestant working class were finding new leaders, and the Catholics were defining new goals, antagonistic to the ruling classes of both Ireland and England. In these circumstances Harold Wilson, prospective Labour Prime Minister, was pressured into an election promise. If elected, he said, the Labour government would do "everything in its power" to see that the "infringements of justice" were effectively dealt with.

The Labour party in power confronted the question of how "infringements of justice" in Ulster were to be dealt with while keeping the capitalist framework secure. The Unionist party, the political expression of Britain's economic interest in Ulster, was adamantly opposed to concessions to the Catholics. To ally with the reformers therefore meant opposing the Unionists. At the same time the reformers, while focusing on civil-rights issues, incorporated elements associated with Ireland's long tradition of armed struggle against imperialism and its less publicized interest in socialism recurrent from James Connolly to the Republican party. Implicit in the agitation for civil rights was the possibility of agitation for rapid unification, national independence, and public ownership of the means of production.

The Labour government attempted to resolve this dilemma by projecting the Unionists in Stormont as the best available agents for reform, as well as the best guardians of British interests in Ireland. Labour's efforts had the effect of polarizing Ulster's political forces and forcing Britain into an alliance with a Unionist party responsive primarily to the mass fascist-type organizations associated with the influence of the Orange Lodges and Paisley. Labour's policy in Northern Ireland proved to be of a piece with its policy in Rhodesia. In

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Ireland 6,000 troops were used from August 1969 to prop up a regime which deprived Catholics of political power. But no troops were sent to Rhodesia to topple a government which had declared independence in order to preserve its right to deprive blacks of political power.

The underlying rationale of Labour's policy was the fact that Britain was the largest single investor in Ireland, North and South. The political stability of Ireland was, therefore, at a premium. To guarantee this stability, successive British governments since the 1950s had tried to strengthen the links between Westminster, Dublin, and Belfast. Dublin and Belfast had cooperated. Both looked to increased foreign investments to solve their acute economic problems.* Both governments thought détente politically expedient. Dublin, under pressure, dropped the partition question. The unification of Ireland, the main international theme of Irish politicians in the late 1940s and early 1950s, took its place with the Irish-language question and other once-burning issues as a subject merely for ritual genuflections. Eire's reward was a revision (by the 1966 Free Trade Agreement) of the trade terms with England. By 1968, the South had become the fifth largest importer of British goods. Meanwhile Belfast had participated in the first tentative moves toward economic cooperation. A joint hydro-electric station was planned, and in 1951 a joint takeover of the Great Northern Railway took place. Economic cooperation between North and South led, in fact, to the political cooperation necessary to defuse the partition question and all its disruptive political implications. The policy survived a renewed effort by the IRA, beginning in 1956, to blast its way to a solution by successive attacks on border posts. But the campaign stirred no popular response and was called off in 1962. The IRA turned to political activity and formed the leftist Republican party which ran

* Unemployment in the South peaked to 90,000 in 1954 and prompted 60,000 to emigrate. In the North, which had benefited from the economic stimulus of the Second World War and some diversification in manufacturing since then, the overall unemployment figure had been reduced by 966 to 6.1 percent, its lowest level since 1956 although a high level compared with England's 1.5 percent. Even this figure masked the difference between Belfast and Derry where the rate was 20 percent.

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candidates in the 1964 election. The way seemed open for Britain to push détente.

The Labour government's priorities—stability first, with reform a poor second—were clearly established in the first Commons debate on Northern Ireland in February 1965. The debate celebrated Labour's first policy success: a meeting between Ulster's and Eire's heads of state for the first time since 1925. Members who tried to discuss the Catholics' political disabilities, however, found themselves sharply reined in. The convention of the House was defined by a Unionist member and upheld by the Speaker: "It has become a recognized practice that the House will debate Northern Ireland once every session," but the content of the debate must not "encroach on the just prerogatives of the Ulster Parliament." The government wanted to contain all agitation of Ulster's political problems and had no intention of abandoning a traditional first line of defense.

Religious discrimination, however, could not be categorized as a responsibility of Stormont and in this connection a Labour MP, Paul Rose, proposed a reform program: the government should extend legislation against racial discrimination to cover religious discrimination, appoint an ombudsman for Northern Ireland, and, most important set up a Royal Commission to investigate all Ulster's problems. He declared: "It is because Northern Ireland is a microcosm of this [racial] problem, be it in Cyprus, Mississippi, the Middle East, or Smethwick, that I believe it's important to us all. I hope that in uncovering this issue we will help to eradicate just one injustice." The appeal was ignored. Interested MPs, however, formed a pressure group, the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster (CDU). Established in June 1965, the CDU took its stand on Section 75 of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, which clearly awarded ultimate authority in Northern Ireland's affairs to Westminster; it called, initially, for the inquiry. In November, after another evasive debate, the CDU sent a delegation to the Home Secretary, who assured them Stormont was being pressed into action. But the ineffectiveness of this pressure was clearly demonstrated the following month when Stormont rejected a memorandum from the Northern Ireland Labour Party and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions urging civil-rights reform.

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The Labour government's inaction in effect sanctioned Stormont's resistance and gave the forces of the right a clear field. The Reverend Ian Paisley who had scented from afar the possible political implications of cooperation between the Protestant and the Catholic ruling classes, North and South, had a friend in Ulster's Home Secretary William Craig. In February 1966, Paisley found funds to supplement his indefatigable preaching and leafleting in the factories with a weekly newspaper, the *Protestant Telegraph*. His influence was demonstrated that summer when a new nongovernment paramilitary force was organized, the First Belfast Battalion of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Petrol bombings and shootings began, and five Catholics were murdered. Three UVF men were tried and found guilty of murder in furtherance of seditious conspiracy. Still the government did nothing, and supporters of Catholic minority rights were prevented even from raising questions in the House of Commons.

What is the explanation of this behavior? Some writers have suggested that Westminster was simply uninformed. The *Sunday Times* journalists, authors of the book *Ulster*, pointed out that until October 1968 "Whitehall had no civil servant devoting full time attention to Ulster." Prime Minister Wilson, they suggested, despite conferences with O'Neill, had no real grasp of what was happening in the province until it exploded in 1968. James Callaghan, then Home Secretary and now Prime Minister, has lent weight to this interpretation by repeating it. At the Home Office, he reported, Ulster was crammed into the General Department, which also dealt with London taxicabs, British summer time, liquor licenses, and the administration of state-owned pubs in Carlisle. But no knowledge of administrative detail was necessary to grasp the essential political problems posed by Northern Ireland: How was a traditionally Protestant-dominated province to be linked economically and politically with the rest of Catholic Ireland for the benefit of British interests North and South, without stirring into action political forces dedicated, on the one hand, to violent defense of the status quo and, on the other, to national unification and perhaps even national ownership of the means of production?

Arguably this latter danger was a cloud smaller than a

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person's hand in 1966. The Communist party in Northern Ireland, founded in 1933 as an all-Ireland party, had accepted partition and won little support. It influenced, however, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), originally founded by Connolly and re-formed as an island-wide organization in 1959. The Republican party, newly formed and Marxist-oriented, commanded limited support. There were in addition various nationalist elements like Republican Labour which were potential supporters. But all the implements on hand to engineer unification from the left were very weak. And if the Labour government had undertaken a bold, innovative, anti-discrimination program, backed up by economic initiatives, it could have pre-empted the bases for socialist growth. It would, at the same time, have contributed to a constructive resolution of the economic grievances which generated Protestant support for Paisley and associated groups.

Nevertheless at every turn, when confronted by a choice between supporting the advocates of reform in the Commons, and in Northern Ireland, the government chose to protect the privileges of the Unionists and the power of the Stormont government. It judged the Unionists to be the only safe instrument for reform, the only reliable element in the Ulster political scene. The fact that consistent support for Stormont was an incentive to Paisley and the forces he represented was evidently considered to be less of a threat to British interests than the civil-rights reformers and their allies.

The failure of the Labour government to initiate reforms forced many of the reformist and socialist groups in Northern Ireland into a nonparty, nonsectarian Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). Founded in February 1967, its objectives were: to define the basic rights of all citizens; to protect the rights of the individual; to highlight all possible abuses of power; to demand guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly, and association; to inform the public of their lawful rights. Its methods were to investigate, publicize, and organize popular support by public meetings and marches. This eminently respectable, predominantly middle-class, reformist organization with left-wing support won no protection from Stormont for its constitutional-style protests and none from Westminster.

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Every move it made was opposed by local Unionists who dictated that protest marches should take place through Catholic areas only. In defense of its own status as a nonsectarian organization, NICRA was eventually forced (October 5, 1968) into a confrontation with the Unionists in Derry, a city where unemployment, discrimination, gerrymandering, religious sectarianism, partisanship in the operation of government services, and police oppression could be seen at their worst. Four Westminster MPs including Gerry Fitt, Republican Labour (i.e., anti-partition) member for West Belfast, supported the demonstration. Under the eyes of the television cameras Fitt was the first man felled by a police onslaught on a march hundreds, rather than thousands, strong. Repeated nightstick charges dispersed the marchers and spread the attack to Saturday shoppers. Seventy-seven people were sent in ambulance loads to the nearest hospital. The conflagration spread to Belfast where, within a week, a new left-wing political group was formed, called Peoples' Democracy, and new armed fascist-type organizations made their appearance.

It was most significant, however, that the Derry confrontation gave rise to massive public support for the civil-rights movement. On October 19 a "sitdown" was organized by the Derry Citizens Action Committee. Thousands, not just hundreds, supported it. Some 15,000 people engulfed the police and streamed into the heartland of Protestantism.

From the point of view of the Labour government, the political repercussions of the Derry confrontation strengthened their enemies. Peoples' Democracy was founded by young intellectuals with an allegiance to Marxism. They took the aims of the Civil Rights Association as their immediate goal, but envisaged the eventual creation of a workers' and small farmers' republic for the whole of Ireland. Peoples' Democracy injected a new, more combative element into the Civil Rights Association's tactics in response to the organized violence of the right. This new group sprang, moreover, from the rising groundswell of popular resistance to the Unionist Party in Stormont and its fascist cohorts outside, the groundswell that had submerged the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Derry on October 19, 1968. Labour's policy now appeared to be in jeopardy.

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Publicly, the Labour government continued to mouth soothing phrases about its confidence in Stormont as an agent of reform. Wilson, under pressure of questions from Campaign for Democracy in Ulster MPs on November 5, assured the House that he had discussed the reform of the local government franchise, allocation of housing, and the Special Powers Act with Ulster's Prime Minister O'Neill and urged him to speedy action. Wilson paid tribute to his "reforming liberalism, as far as it has gone." Privately the government began to press for action. The results were not encouraging. O'Neill's reform package, unveiled on November 22, 1968, made the most minimal concessions. It did not include the key civil-rights demand of one person–one vote, and promised to remove only those parts of the Special Powers Act which conflicted with international obligations, and this only when it could be done "without undue hazard."

The civil-rights movement continued its campaign and the Unionists their opposition. The resulting conflicts prompted Gerry Fitt on December 2 to call for a Commons debate on "the breakdown of law and order in Northern Ireland and the safety of British subjects in that part of the U.K." The debate was denied, but hidden pressure continued. O'Neill dismissed his Home Secretary, Paisley's friend William Craig; and Wilson twice assured the House before Christmas that further speedy reforms were possible. In the New Year, however, the Unionists showed their teeth: a civil-rights march organized by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, Peoples' Democracy, and the Derry Citizens Action Committee was ambushed at Burntollet under the eyes of the police, pelted with freshly quarried stones and bottles brought in advance to the ambush site; the marchers were clubbed with nail-studded cudgels and flung into a stream three feet deep. The attack was repeated when the survivors reached Derry; for good measure the Royal Ulster Constabulary also invaded the Catholic ghetto, and 163 people were sent to hospital.

The Labour government, in the glare of publicity, was now forced to demand an investigation. O'Neill acceded, and the Cameron Commission was set up. This gesture was sufficient to weaken seriously the Ulster Prime Minister's support in the Unionist party. Brian Faulkner, representative of the Unionist

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far right, resigned in protest, and O'Neill was precipitated into an election in which the Unionists divided into pro- and anti-O'Neill factions. O'Neill himself was returned with a reduced majority. Pressure from London for reform continued, and Paisley was imprisoned briefly for his role in one civil-rights confrontation. At the same time, the reformers continued to make gains: three candidates were elected to Stormont in February. Peoples' Democracy candidate Bernadette Devlin was elected to Westminster as an Independent on April 17. These developments triggered massive Unionist violence, directed especially at Belfast's power and water supplies, which in turn resulted in O'Neill's resignation on April 28.

The Labour government's wishful "solution" to its fundamental dilemma of reconciling its reformism with its commitment to the capitalist-imperialist framework, now led it into an alliance with a Unionist party leadership stripped of the "reforming liberalism" of O'Neill. The new Prime Minister, Chichester-Clark, was joined in the government by Brian Faulkner, the man the right wing of the party relied on to maintain Unionist supremacy. The mass base of the party had succeeded in creating a Unionist leadership more sympathetic to its own aims and had done so through the power of its paramilitary organizations which were capable, when confronted with the threat of political concessions to the Catholics, of massive retaliation against both people and government property. If the reforms had actually been implemented, the paramilitaries appeared prepared to take over state power.

The Labour government, however, was not about to implement the reforms. In the debate (April 1969) precipitated by the explosions, it was the government's critics who clamored for action and identified its inaction as the root cause of violence in the province. Paul Rose, of the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster, advocated that Stormont should either act or abdicate; Bernadette Devlin called for immediate abolition of Stormont and direct rule from Westminster. The government was reminded that the recent party conference had identified Labour as the party of civil rights and that, on an international level, the government could not wax eloquent on Rhodesia with Northern Ireland in its backyard. The Unionist government, they were

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reminded, existed only by virtue of the Special Powers Act which denied justice to 40 percent of the population.

These accusations and demands were ignored. What the government was concerned about was the protection of public property from the "extremists." The attack on Belfast's water supply had brought half of Ulster's regular garrison of 2,500 soldiers out of barracks to guard public utilities. The first step had been taken to prop up Stormont with bayonets.

According to the *Sunday Times* Insight Team, the possibility of military intervention, the crudest weapon in the imperialist armory, had been discussed since Burntollet, and a search put in hand for a Commander-in-Chief with experience of "politically tricky" situations. As the situation in Ulster deteriorated during the summer of 1969, the need for troops to back up Stormont became clearer. Organizations and clashes multiplied. But Wilson, brass-faced, told the Commons on May 22 that he was waiting on "a period of calm" in which to push through further reforms. By July, however, when General Sir Ian Freeland, veteran of Cyprus, was made Commander-in-Chief he sensed "there was a smell in the air."

The annual Protestant parades of July and August threatened to become flash points for conflict. Stormont did not have the power to prevent them, and its future depended either on an overt alliance with the paramilitary organizations or on British army reinforcements. The flash points began to detonate. The July 12 parade prompted three days of conflict in Derry, in which one man was killed; another Royal Ulster Constabulary invasion of Derry's Bogside followed on August 12. This time the people defended themselves with barricades and petrol bombs. The battle was taken up in Belfast where the RUC and the B-Specials together invaded the Catholic sectors of the city. They drove the people out of their houses and left their followers to burn them. They used armored cars, machine guns, and automatic rifles. Seven people were killed, 400 wounded, and 500 houses destroyed. The Catholics, virtually unarmed, built barricades and threw petrol bombs, defending themselves as best they could, but finally felt it necessary to appeal to the British government for protection.

At this juncture, the government of Eire roused itself, be-

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latedly, on behalf of its kith and kin in Northern Ireland. Prime Minister Lynch told a television audience on August 13: "It is evident that the Stormont government is no longer in control of the situation. Indeed the present situation is the inevitable outcome of the policies pursued for decades by successive Stormont governments. It is clear also that the Irish government can no longer stand by and see innocent people murdered and perhaps worse." Army units and field ambulances were sent to the border, Irish troops were momentarily expected in Derry, and Britain was urged to call in United Nations peace-keeping forces.

All in all, the conditions for a British military intervention could hardly have been more propitious. The situation in Ireland had deteriorated to the point where the army was apparently needed to restrain the violent passions of the Unionist right, to defend the Catholic minority from pogroms, to prevent conflict with Eire, to avoid the national humiliation of a UN intervention, as well as to defend Stormont. The troops were sent first to Derry on August 14, and then reinforcements went to Belfast—4,000 to begin with, increased to 6,000 within a week.

The Labour government, for all its lip service to the principles of parliamentary democracy, undertook what the *Sunday Times* Insight Team termed "its most significant military commitment for a generation" without attempting to recall Parliament from its August recess. No debate on government policy took place until October, after the army had made its first intervention and the government had sympathy for the lads in khaki on its side.

The army enabled the Labour government to preserve its reformist stance while securing the structure of the Ulster state. The essence of the arrangement was summarized in the communiqué issued on August 19 after consultation with members of the Ulster Cabinet. The army took over security. It was given control of the Royal Ulster Constabulary for security operations and full command of the B-Specials, with a view to rapidly relieving them of their duties. The army was put in control of the essential business of maintaining law and order, preserving the continuation of the state. Stormont was left with

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the responsibility for promoting reform. An instant blueprint was provided by the recommendations of the Cameron Commission, set up by O'Neill to investigate the attack on the civil-rights marchers at Burntollet. Published on August 16, it recommended government action on housing allocation, job discrimination, and electoral boundaries, as well as commissions of enquiry on both the future of the RUC and the recent "disturbances." By the end of the month, Stormont, assisted by civil servants from Whitehall, had set up working parties on these questions.

The army was in Northern Ireland because Stormont had lost control of the state. As Home Secretary Callaghan by his own account* told Ulster Prime Minister Chichester-Clark and his Minister of Home Affairs on August 9: "A government which could not control the streets or the population was not a government in our understanding of the word." Labour therefore had an opportunity to do precisely what its critics had urged it to do: abolish Stormont and implement constitutional reforms guaranteeing proportional representation to the Catholic minority. As Paul Rose reminded the House (April 7, 1970), "The root cause of the troubles in Northern Ireland is that for 50 years one third of the citizens have been excluded from all participation in the government of that country"; the people had a right to share power.

The Labour government proved again, at this moment of choice, that the rights of the people were not its priority. Callaghan said, and the government's action demonstrated, that a Unionist government and the constitution with which it was identified—even when British bayonets were needed to maintain it, and even when its leadership cooperated with a paramilitary base—were considered to be a more reliable guardian of British interests than a parliament in which power would be shared by nationalist and socialist elements. The government's aim was "to try and restore a sense of confidence in the Ulster Unionist Cabinet." It is especially worth noting that at this stage the Provisional IRA had not yet emerged.

* J. Callaghan, *A House Divided* (London: 1972).

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On a brief visit to Ireland at the end of August 1969, Callaghan discovered that the Labour government had only one significant ally for its continued support of the Unionists. Businessmen, industrialists, trade unionists, and newspaper editors were all contemptuous of Stormont, impatient with Protestant pretensions to own the state and its institutions, in favor of minority representation by at least one minister, and convinced that changes could not be handled by the existing government —unless (and they were talking to Callaghan) the British exerted pressure. It was Paisley, ideologue of the paramilitaries, who told him: "The defense of the constitution was what people were really concerned about." Chichester-Clark had already impressed this view on Callaghan; when asked whether he could broaden the base of his government, he said that "there was absolutely no possibility of that." The constitution meant Unionist rule, and only Unionist rule guaranteed the constitution.

The Catholic minority drew its own conclusions from Labour's continued support for the Unionists: they had to fend for themselves. The August pogroms had found them undefended; the disbandment of the B-Specials and the disarming of the RUC meant nothing to a population at the mercy of Protestant paramilitary groups with more or less unofficial connections with the Unionists in Stormont who were backed by the British army.

Out of these circumstances grew the "Provisional" IRA. The left-oriented Republican party, successor to the traditional IRA, provided no defense for the Catholic ghettos in August 1969. It was pilloried in graffiti on Belfast walls with the slogan "IRA—I Ran Away." The party split into the leftist "Official" Republicans who continued to emphasize socialist goals through constitutional action, and the predominantly nationalist "Provisional" Republicans who emphasized national unification through military means. The Provisional IRA, armed wing of the Provisional Republican party, has provided the rationalization for British policy ever since.

The essential similarity between the purposes of both the Labour and Conservative parties, their joint concern for the maintenance of the capitalist-imperialist framework, was reflected by the Conservatives' support for the Labour government

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during this whole period. In the Commons debate of October 13, 1969, which followed the army's October 1969 intervention, the Conservatives' Quintin Hogg and the Labour government's Denis Healey exchanged congratulations. "I believe," said Hogg, succinctly, "that our objectives . . . are identical." Healey, more expansively, declared: "Today, the leaders of these parties (just returned from their annual conferences preparing for a general election) are united in total solidarity on the most explosive political issue facing Britain at the present time."

As Callaghan viewed it, on April 7, 1969, in his last speech to the Commons as Home Secretary, the people of Northern Ireland had a choice: "To live under the shadow of the gunman," or to support "the constitutional government . . . and the full implementation of the reforms on which the Ulster Unionist government have embarked." Rose raised a voice in support of proportional representation; but the great body of Labour MPs, putting their weight behind Callaghan and Hogg, thought it wise and moderate and reasonable to use all their power to contain this explosive situation. They preferred to have the people of Northern Ireland living in the shadow of the gunman, professional and amateur, than to implement parliamentary democracy in a situation where left-wing elements dedicated to a united Ireland and a socialist Ireland could win, constitutionally, a share of power.

Nationalism without Socialism—without a reorganization of society on the basis of a broader and more developed form of that common property which underlay the social structure of Ancient Erin—is only national recreancy.

It would be tantamount to a public declaration that our oppressors had, so far, succeeded in inoculating us with their perverted conceptions of justice and morality, that we had finally decided to accept those conceptions as our own, and no longer needed an alien army to force them upon us.

As a Socialist I am prepared to do all one man can do to achieve for our motherland her rightful heritage—independence; but if you ask me to abate one jot or tittle of the claims of social justice, in order to conciliate the privileged classes, then I must decline.

—James Connolly, 1897, in *Selected Writings*, Monthly Review Press, 1973.

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BOOKS

NO NUKES!

By the Editors

Considerations of Environmental Protection Criteria for Radioactive Waste, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Radiation Programs, Waste Environmental Standards Program, Washington, D.C. 20460, February 1978.

Most government reports make dull reading, and this one is no exception. But it contains a message which needs to be taken in by everyone even minimally concerned about the future of the human race. That message, quite simply, is that there is not *and cannot be* a safe program for disposing of radioactive wastes. The reasons are basically simple, do not depend on any complicated scientific arguments, and cannot be refuted or made irrelevant by any conceivable increase in scientific knowledge or technological capability. They can be summed up in a series of quotations from the report:

"It is generally conceded that risk estimates for many of the long-lived radionuclides would depend on numerous imprecise variables which would be little more than speculation after certain time periods. For example, C-14, Pu-239, and I-129 could present potential dose commitments for hundreds of thousands to millions of years. Such uncertainty could result in intense controversy over any calculations or judgments upon which environmental protection criteria or standards would be based. This circumstance places a considerable burden on government decisions regarding radioactive wastes." (p. 1) The only trouble with this statement is that "considerable burden" should read "absolutely unsustainable burden."

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"Other [than TRU-contaminated wastes] radionuclides which may be of special concern are I-129 and C-14. Iodine-129 is a volatile nuclide with a half-life of seventeen million years; thus its isolation from the biosphere over the long term will be difficult to assure. Carbon-14 has a half-life of 5,600 years and, if released to the biosphere, would represent exposure of the entire world's population due to rapid movement into the carbon cycle." (p. 10) Why "difficult to assure"? Why not "totally impossible to assure"?

"It should be noted . . . that there is no way to guarantee protection from pollutants such as radioactive materials which are assumed to have no threshold for effects, other than by prohibiting their production." (p. 14)

"The degree of risk that the producing generation passes on to the future represents an important legacy of radioactive wastes. This transference involves a moral judgment of responsibility, including the length of time for which responsibility extends into the future.* An ethical basis for decisions regarding risk transference is needed not only for philosophical reasons, but also for the practical purpose of implementing evaluation techniques and risk-cost analyses. Unfortunately, society has not established clear approaches for dealing with the imposition of such risks far into the future." (pp. 17-18) Fortunately we do not need to assume that society will remain forever incapable of attaining a "clear" understanding of the situation and taking a stand against the imposition of *any* such risks on future generations.

"Isolation of waste materials is an important consideration for reducing their risk-producing potential. . . . In general, permanent isolation cannot be expected. . . ." Or maybe even for 5,600 years? See next quotation.

"Uncertainties dominate predictive ability. For more than a few thousand years, there is only uncertainty." (p. 26) Of course it might be safer to date the onset of total uncertainty a bit sooner, say a few decades.

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* In this connection it is reassuring to be told that "a study of public attitudes and values associated with radioactive waste disposal based on polling techniques showed that long-term safety is widely held to be at least as important as safety over the short term." (p. 16) What the people lack is apparently not decent values but adequate knowledge.

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"Deciding on a reasonable time for dependency on institutional controls is essentially equivalent to estimating the shortest likely period of institutional continuity. It is clear that there is no definitive scientific method for such a determination, but it is difficult to predict the course of events from current trends for more than several hundred years." (p. 26) One could wish for a footnote reference here citing examples from the past of such predictions for *up to* several hundred years.

"Radiation effect on health at low doses and dose rates are presumed to have a linear dose-response relationship for public health protection purposes. This implies that any radiation dose, however small, conveys a proportionate chance of producing a genetic alteration or a somatic health effect such as cancer. . . . Within this context, therefore, the appropriate goal is to avoid any increment of radiation in the general environment due to radioactive waste." (p. 1) And this leads logically to the next statement: "Because total avoidance of exposure may be very costly or difficult to guarantee [as previous quotations have shown, the report has already argued that total avoidance of exposure is *impossible* to guarantee], people might choose to forego the benefits of the waste-producing activities." All the more so, one would think, because by far the greatest of these "benefits" is to add to the potential for blowing up the world!

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AMERICA'S NEW VIETNAM?

By Richard Morrock

Rhodesia, by Robin Moore. New York: Condor, 1977.

Robin Moore, best-selling author, stands as a towering monument to the depravity of American culture. A semi-literate hack, he struck gold with *The French Connection,* and went on to make propaganda for the Pentagon with *The Green Berets.* With *Rhodesia,* his latest excrescence, Moore continues his career as a propagandist for causes slightly to the left of the Nazi party. Only one set of circumstances makes this book at all worthy of notice. Moore now lives in Salisbury, where he functions as a self-styled "unofficial American ambassador" to Ian Smith's racist regime, which has not, of course, been officially recognized by any nation. Actually, as this book makes clear, Moore's role is to serve as Smith's ambassador to the United States, rather than the other way around. Just as the writings of Father Thomas Dooley about Indochina, during the 1950s, helped set the stage for the Vietnam war, so Moore expects to pave the way for U.S. intervention in Zimbabwe in the name of fighting "Communist terrorism" and "Russian aggression."

It is unlikely, however, that Moore will sway the opinions of anyone but the most besotted racist. Clumsier than a drunk on

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Richard Morrock, who is now writing for the off-Broadway theater, has contributed to MR in the past, including "Rhodesia: Historical Background" in the issue of January 1966.

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snowshoes, Moore spews forth factual errors, illogical arguments, and flat self-contradictions, until the reader is left wondering why Smith didn't find someone else competent to do the job. Moore, for example, describes Zimbabwe as being the size of Texas, although a casual check would have shown that Texas is a good deal larger. He makes the outrageous claim that the Mozambican Africans were "happy and prosperous" under Portuguese rule. Idi Amin, to whom Moore refers incessantly, is described as a "Marxist," although no Africanist would accuse Amin of holding any ideological convictions whatsoever. Even reactionary, neo-colonial Malawi is labelled Communist, which gives an idea of what Moore really means when he says that U.S. mercenaries are helping Smith to fight Communism.

Murders of missionaries, which Zimbabwean nationalists blame on Smith's Selous Scouts, are attributed by Moore to the "terrorists" of ZANU and ZAPU. At the same time, he accuses the missionaries themselves, particularly the Catholics, of recruiting young Africans into the nationalist movements. What then, we may ask, could the motives of ZANU and ZAPU be if they had really been the missionaries' killers? Moore explains that the guerrillas kill the missionaries in order to win popularity, because the missionaries are hated by the people, because they recruit for the guerrillas! Simple enough.

Arguing that the Africans do not support ZANU and ZAPU, Moore trips himself up by quoting from sources that give just the opposite impression. An interview with Smith's puppet Chief Jeremiah Chirau has this "moderate leader" saying: ". . . people are really disturbed; they just don't know what to do. They listen to the terrorists and follow them." Elsewhere, Moore reprints an article from a settler periodical, describing an unsuccessful guerrilla raid on a white-owned ranch near the Mozambique border. Says the owner: "We . . . knew trouble was coming because of our labor force. Their attitude changed completely. The younger ones especially were getting very 'anti,' and they started deserting the ranch." The attack itself was led by an African cook who had worked for the white family for many years; and following the attack, all but a handful of the older workers left along with the guerrillas.

Although Moore, incredibly, describes Smith's army as "the only truly integrated army in the world," he shows that quite the opposite is true. White draftees serve in the Rhodesian Light Infanty (RLI), which also contains many foreign mercenaries. Afri-

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can volunteers, however, serve in the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR). The RAR had only white officers until mid-1977, when some African second lieutenants were commissioned. Although Moore doesn't mention it, the RAR gets lower pay than the RLI. In addition, there are the paratroopers, or Special Air Services; this unit is all white. A unit called the Fifth Protection Company is made up entirely of men of Colored (mixed race) origin, but is commanded by a white American, Major Mike Williams, who is a personal friend of Moore's. Says Williams: "Discipline in colored units has to be very strict because these people are hard cases and unless you are willing, if the occasion demands, to belt one over the head with a pistol if you can't handle them." (*sic*) The Major prefers the American .45, since the 9mm Browning is "too light for cracking heads." Of all units in Smith's army, only the Selous Scouts are genuinely multi-racial in composition.

Interviews with mercenaries, mostly American, make up a good part of the book. While the interviews have a certain sameness to them, some of the flavor of the war manages to come through. At times, it sounds like Vietnam. Moore paraphrases one American:

> The way Americans were taught to fight a war against guerrillas is to remove their bases of supply, their food sources and all their basic sources of intelligence. This of course is accomplished by burning the villages to the ground and moving the people out to the protected villages where they are separated from the terrorists. Then you can shoot anyone that moves in the evacuated area since they have to be terrorists. (p. 228)

And at other times, we are reminded of even earlier genocidal campaigns against those who stood in the way of American Manifest Destiny. Moore relates

> the case of a young American southerner who has been fighting in the Rhodesian army for a year. A powerful individual and an expert in the kind of war of attrition that is going on in Rhodesia today, the Yank is a valued member of his commando group in the Rhodesian Light Infantry. He reports that African girls still steeped in the old customs are an experience a young man should not miss. Recently, out in the bush, he gunned down a terrorist almost as big as he was himself. He carried the body back to the Commando post and laid it down with a touch of reverence. "I just killed my father-in-law again," he remarked. (p. 172)

Moore is just a little too unsubtle. With books like this one, he might end up giving fascism a bad name!

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CORRESPONDENCE

A SMALL BUT IMPORTANT VICTORY

We are glad to publish the following communication from the Berkeley-based Nuclear Weapons Labs Conversion Project. It exemplifies the kind of practical educational and propaganda activity radicals can effectively carry on even in periods of political apathy and repression. — THE EDITORS

It is not often that people can claim decisive victories over the intransigence and unresponsive character of most of our "public institutions." The small but decisive court victory of six members of the University of California Nuclear Weapons Labs Conversion Project (UCNWLCP) is one exception. These six people, who conducted a sit-in at the University of California which led to an eight-day trial, were acquitted of trespassing charges on February 9 by an eight-woman, four-man jury in a Berkeley-Albany municipal court.

The UCNWLCP was organized by a coalition of Bay Area groups in the fall of 1976 to challenge the university's renewal of its five-year contract with the Energy Research and Development Administration (now the Department of Energy) to operate the nation's two major nuclear weapons research labs, Livermore and Los Alamos. We have pressed the university to solicit public input into the contract renewal process and to engage in public educational forums about the arms race and the university's part in it.

When we sat-in at University President Saxon's office and six of us were arrested on November 4 after 30 hours, our demand—backed up by a year of futile correspondence with the university—was simply that Saxon appoint someone to represent officially in public debate the university's policy on its involvement in nuclear weapons research. Saxon's response to our year-long efforts has

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been repeatedly to declare that public debate would serve "no useful purpose." After failing in his attempt to quash a subpoena, Saxon acknowledged on the witness stand that his response to demands for public discussion from the UCNWLCP—not to mention Congressman Dellums, State Assemblyman Bates, and other university personnel—was to arrange for the signing of the contracts even more "expeditiously."

Saxon has consistently argued in an irresponsible manner that the university's negotiation of this contract was just an "administrative issue" and posed no moral questions. He has also maintained that no one is able to represent the university's position, since its 200,000 personnel hold diverse opinions on the subject—as if the regents' agreement to manage the labs does not represent a conscious university policy.

In other words, Saxon's arguments were not only unconvincing, they did not even directly address the community demand for public discussion of the policies of a public institution. The true character of the university is revealed in its use of police intimidation to stifle the determined and lawful political business of California citizens. Saxon's remark to one of the sitters when she politely approached him to arrange an appointment tells it all: "Go away, go away, go away."

In almost four days of defense testimony—which included the six defendants, California Assemblyman John Vasconsellos, and Daniel Ellsberg—we managed to refute Saxon's position and the District Attorney's "law and order" argument that we posed a security risk to a short-handed police force. The jurors received an extensive education on the escalating destructive character of the arms race, the environmental hazards of the labs' work, and especially the dangers of secrecy and elitism in the government's formulation of weapons policies.

The jurors became convinced that the real issue in the trial was the university's involvement in nuclear-weapons research and its secrecy about that involvement. Despite the judge's narrow interpretation of the statute, the jurors exercised their independent judgment to acquit us after two and a half hours of deliberation. Their decision affirmed our legal right to occupy Saxon's office to press this demand. They rejected and even expressed their personal disapproval of the university's substance-less responses and bureaucratic tactics in reply to our legitimate political demands. When these twelve strangers, representative of widespread public opinion, left the courtroom saying that "the wrong people were

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on trial," and that "the UCNWLCP has twelve new members," it was apparent that it was the university which was incapable of justifying its actions.

The jurors' evaluation of the issues provides the UCNWLCP with a tremendous boost of confidence for its ongoing work. A Saxon-appointed committee recommended in mid-February that the university continue this "public service" managerial role with only minor bureaucratic modifications. The complicity between the university administration, corporate powers, and the military continues to be exposed, as with the recent disclosure of university cooperation with the CIA. UCNWLCP will continue to keep the heat on the university to fulfill its role of educating the public on critical issues rather than engaging in secret dealings behind the people's backs. We will continue to work with other interested groups nationwide to convert the Livermore and Los Alamos labs to peaceful use and to bring the war-making powers of this country under effective public control.

The National Mobilization for Survival is coordinating a nationwide schedule of locally organized protest activities at nuclear weapon and nuclear energy sites. There are action groups organizing around these issues in every region of the country. To find out about the activities in your area contact the National Mobilization for Survival, 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107.

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URBAN PLANNING IN THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA

By Hans Blumenfeld

I have read with considerable interest the article by Larry Sawers on "Urban Planning in the Soviet Union and China" in the March 1977 issue of MR. I consider it to be in error.

Sawers evaluates developments in the light of two goals which command the adherence of the mainstream of urban planners in the West. He formulates them very adequately as: (1) "spatial arrangements of residences should be designed to foster social interaction"; and (2) "growth of large cities should be limited and that of smaller cities encouraged."

The coincidence of Sawers' goals with those of Western planners, however, says nothing about their validity either way. I, for one, have questioned them for many years and naturally welcome similar questioning by my Soviet colleagues as a sign of emancipation from their obsession of "catching up with the

Hans Blumenfeld was trained in Germany as an architect, worked in urban and regional planning in the Soviet Union from 1930 to 1937, and since 1938 in the United States and Canada. He is presently teaching at the University of Toronto.

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West," and more importantly from unquestioning acceptance of received dogma.

As to the first point, Sawers' report on the very important political, economic, and social activities of Chinese neighborhoods confirms my conclusion from other reports that they occur under the most diverse "spatial arrangements." The belief that such arrangements can significantly "foster" social behavior is a pathetically simplistic form of environmental determinism; and I share my Soviet colleagues' belief that *physical* planners can do little about alienation.

More amenable to objective verification is the second point, the question of the distribution of the population by size of settlement. All socialist, like practically all capitalist, countries pursue the goal of limiting the trend toward cities, particularly the largest ones. Sawers expresses the belief that "urban geography . . . does or should differ between socialism and capitalism." It does in fact differ, as I have shown in some detail for the USSR and the GDR.* It is now possible to compare the successes of these two countries with those of China in pursuit of the same goal. Two questions have to be answered: urban versus rural population, and large versus smaller cities.

The annual growth rate of the urban population of China for the years 1949-1975 averaged 6.75 percent;** the urban share of the total population rose from 10.6 percent to about 20 percent. In the Soviet Union from 1920 to 1939 the annual growth of the urban population averaged 5.6 percent; since 1939 the rate of urban growth has slowed down. During these same years the urban share of the national population grew from 15.5 percent to 32.8 percent. Thus urban growth in the Soviet Union was absolutely somewhat lower but relatively somewhat higher than in China during a comparable period. In the German Democratic Republic (GDR), with the same total population in 1975 as in 1939, the percentage of the population in cities with populations of over 20,000 increased only from 43.4 percent to 46.2 percent.

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* Hans Blumenfeld, "Growth Rate Comparisons: Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic," *Land Economics,* Madison, Wisconsin (May 1973).

** Frances Po-Chu Chung, *Rural-Urban Migration: A Case Study of the People's Republic of China,* Master's Thesis (unpublished), University of British Columbia, Vancouver, May 1977.

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There is practically no difference between the Soviet Union and China in the rate of urbanization. It may also be noted that both the percentage shares and the rate of urban growth from 1949 to 1975 were the same in Indonesia as they were in China. On the other hand, there was practically no urbanization in already fairly urbanized East Germany. In West Germany the share of urban population increased from 40.5 percent in 1925 to 48.9 percent in 1967, at a rate faster than in the GDR. As a whole, a comparative analysis of these figures lends some credence to the view of Soviet planners that urbanism is more closely correlated with the level of development of the forces of production than with production relations.

If the well-known heroic efforts of China to reverse rural-urban migration have had no demonstrable effect, perhaps China has been more successful than the Soviet Union in limiting the growth of its largest cities and channeling growth to smaller ones? The number of cities in China with populations over one million has grown from seven in 1948 to twenty-six in 1976—a close second to the United States, which in 1975 had thirty-five Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) of over one million. The Soviet Union had ten cities over a million in 1970. This may now have grown to thirteen, or one-half as many as in China, out of a total urban population of roughly equal size. In the Soviet Union the ten cities over one million accounted for 15.1 percent of total urban population, a slightly lower percentage than had been represented by the two cities in this size class on the eve of the Revolution. In China the growth of cities of over one million from seven in 1948-1949 to seventeen in 1957-1958 meant an increase of the share of this top size group in the urban population from 21.6 percent to 30.9 percent.

This is in strong contrast with the development in the GDR, where the share of the six cities with populations over 250,000 dropped from 22.8 percent of the total population in 1939 to 17.6 percent in 1969. Most of the increase in urban population, from 16.7 percent to 19.6 percent of the total, took place in the 20,000 to 100,000-size group. More recently, in 1975, this group had a net migration gain of 1.7 percent, compared with only 0.7 percent in the larger cities.

Of greatest concern to planners has been and is the over-concentration in "primate" cities, in "developing" even more than in developed countries. With the single exception of Budapest, the capitals of the European socialist countries are much smaller

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than those of comparable capitalist countries, despite the fact that all of them are also their countries' biggest industrial centers. This is true even for Moscow and Leningrad, with about 7.5 and 4.5 million people, respectively. The population of China's two biggest cities, Shanghai and Peking, is given as eleven and seven million, respectively. As these figures are for territories which include large areas of land under cultivation, they may include as many as a million "rural" people. Even if these are deducted, however, these two cities are one third bigger than their Soviet counterparts.

To sum up: the evidence shows clearly that China has been less successful than the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries in limiting the growth of large cities and encouraging small ones. If I insist on documenting this, it is not to denigrate Chinese achievements but because Sawers' blindness strikingly illustrates the fact that counterposing Chinese to Soviet achievements can lead to a gross misunderstanding of both.

Mao's most fruitful innovation in Marxism was the policy of "walking on two legs," mobilizing the creative power of the masses, only a small part of whom could be employed in modern high-technology industries, to develop improved ways of labor-intensive production. But it does mean *both* legs: the high-technology sector is of equal, indeed of growing, importance. As the Chinese—like everybody else—found that this sector can work effectively only in big cities, at least in its early stages, they did not hesitate to accept it. This is definitely to their credit; but it disturbs many on the "New Left" who expect the Chinese to solve the West's problems rather than their own.

Some years ago a French student who had visited China just after the Cultural Revolution replied to my question about what he had found different from his expectations that he had not expected the strong emphasis on production. Sawers goes even further in imputing his own biases to the Chinese by saying, "In a socialist society . . . elaborate consumer choice is counterproductive." I doubt that this opinion is shared by the millions of Chinese, from Mao down, who have been and are working hard, and successfully, to enlarge the choice of their comrades.

I also question Paul Sweezy's interpretation of the slogan "put politics in command" as a rejection of emphasis on economic growth. I am not aware of any statement by Mao which says this. I was even more puzzled by his statement (MR, December 1976, p. 4) that "for capitalism as a whole this means that

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it is inherently and necessarily an expanding system which must ultimately, if it is not replaced sooner, come into fatal conflict with its natural environment." Here he seems to ascribe the very real threat to the biosphere not to the specific character of capitalist production, but to expansion as such. This is the thesis of "zero growth" proclaimed by the highly intelligent capitalists of the Club of Rome and widely accepted as the new gospel in the West. In this perspective it becomes the task of the revolution to fetter the forces of production rather than unfetter them, as Marx thought. I wish Sweezy would explain his thoughts about the growth of the forces of production.

"From forms of development of the forces of production these [production] relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution." (Marx, Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*)

PAUL SWEEZY COMMENTS

I am glad to accept the invitation of my long-time friend Hans Blumenfeld to comment on "politics in command" and the growth of productive forces. But first I have to correct his interpretation that I equate politics in command with rejection of emphasis on economic growth. I wrote him asking what I had said that gave him this impression, and he replied: "My remark as to your interpretation of the slogan 'put politics in command' as a rejection of emphasis on economic growth refers to your counterposing it to 'put economics in command.'"

It is true that I have counterposed "politics in command" to "economics in command," and I suppose that in the context of a capitalist society it is not unreasonable to identify the latter with emphasis on economic growth, it being understood that economic growth here has the meaning that bourgeois economists have given to the concept, i.e., the quantitative expansion of the Gross National Product (GNP) regardless of its qualitative composition or distribution. I should remind Hans Blumenfeld, however, that this concept of GNP has long been the target of criticism from the left. Growth of GNP, radicals have argued, and conclusively demonstrated, does not necessarily indicate, let alone measure, any improvement in the well-being of a country's inhabitants, and indeed the opposite may just as well be the case.

A corollary of this is that economic growth in the GNP sense is not a proper or acceptable policy goal for a socialist society or a society striving to attain socialism. But this does *not*

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mean that such a society can or should reject the pursuit of economic growth in a more rational and meaningful sense—e.g., a continuous increase in the production of goods and services needed by, and accruing to, the overwhelming majority of the people in order for them to be able to live healthier and happier lives as whole human beings. In my view putting politics in command means, among other things, accepting *this kind* of economic growth as a necessary and desirable objective while at the same time decisively rejecting economic growth in the traditional capitalist sense of the term.

When it comes to the growth of productive forces, we have a closely related set of problems. Under capitalism "productive" means productive of surplus value, and growth of productive forces means adding surplus value to capital, preferably in a form which will *accelerate* the production of surplus value. If this means degrading the worker to the status of an adjunct of a machine or of a replaceable robot in a bureaucratic hierarchy—it generally does, as Harry Braverman has so brilliantly shown in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*—this does not count, in capitalist logic, as a countervailing *destruction* of forces of production. By capitalist standards, in other words, "growth of productive forces" can and normally does take place simultaneously with (in Marx's words) the "crippling" of the worker and his reduction to "a mere fragment of a man." But socialists cannot allow themselves to be bound by any such monstrous anti-human logic: surely they must never cease insisting that the only real growth of productive forces is that which liberates and enhances the productive power of men and women working together in a cooperative social labor process. And this can be achieved only if strict attention is at all times paid to questions which can never be answered on economic grounds alone for the simple reason that they are quintessentially *political* questions: What kinds of productive forces are to be developed? According to what scale of priorities? By what methods? To seek earnestly to answer these questions *and* to be guided in practice by the answers—this, I believe, is the deepest meaning of putting politics in command.

As to my statement that ultimately capitalism must, "if it is not replaced sooner, come into fatal conflict with its natural environment," I am at a loss to understand why Hans Blumenfeld should interpret this as "ascrib[ing] the very real threat to the biosphere not to the specific character of capitalist production, but to expansion as such." I had in mind precisely *capitalist* pro-

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duction and *capitalist* expansion, not expansion as such (whatever that may be) and still less socialist expansion. This question, too, ties in with the foregoing discussion of politics in command and growth of productive forces.

In closing, let me say that I speak for all of MR's editors in welcoming Hans Blumenfeld's contribution to the discussion of Soviet and Chinese patterns of urbanization. I would like to add, however, that at least in the Chinese case I think it would be more enlightening to divide the period since the victory of the revolution into two parts—roughly the 1950s on the one hand and the 1960s and early 1970s on the other. In the earlier period, when the Chinese were quite consciously copying the Soviet model, a very rapid increase in the size of the cities took place, along with overcrowding and a great deal of unemployment. Much of the thrust of the Great Leap Forward, and even more of the Cultural Revolution, was to check and if possible reverse these trends, not so much by directly controlling the growth of the cities as by industrializing the countryside. If I interpret Larry Sawers' article correctly, its main emphasis was on the later period, a fact which tends to be obscured by the presentation of averages and trends calculated for the whole period since 1949.

RADICAL THERAPISTS AND THE EGO

The Role of Radical Therapy, by Arthur Maglin (*MR,* April 1977), struck me as a sensible analysis of certain therapeutic approaches and the problems they may entail. One major problem, though, is not mentioned: the current attitude of some radical therapists toward what Freud, accurately enough, called the "ego" —tending to confuse personal effectiveness with a necessarily capitalist orientation. It should be clear that even in a society based entirely on use values, there would still be any number of "transactional" situations between people—or between individuals and institutions. Thus, any attempt merely to denigrate the ego (rather than to reorder its content) is a way of throwing out the baby with the bath water.

Alan Bahr

New York City
May 1977

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(*Continued from inside front cover*)
by the office staff and many friends marked the occasion, and everyone present expressed the fervent wish and the confident expectation that Sybil will go on being a pillar of the MR establishment for many years to come. We are only sorry that the literally hundreds of MR Associates and subscribers with whom she has corresponded over the years could not be with us on that memorable occasion.

It is with profound regret and sorrow that we record the death after a long illness of Olga Field, one of our and MR's oldest friends, on March 28 at the age of 63. For several years during the 1960s when Leo Huberman was in failing health, Olga took over as a sort of general manager of the MR office and saw the magazine and press through a difficult period. Olga's radicalism was deep and unshakable, her activities in furtherance of it loving and indefatigable. We can do no better than repeat words from a tribute to her written shortly after her death by her friend Jackie Lapidus: "Well, Olga, you were a tough lady, facing emphysema as if it were a Congressional committee, refusing to participate in murder, your life the ultimate conspiracy. . . . I wish I could have seen you first, Olga, just to let you know how much I'll miss you. Give my regards to Rosa, Emma, Kollontai, and Vera Z."

We also mourn the death of a newer but older friend, Ilona Duczynska, who died suddenly of a stroke in her home near Toronto on May 2 in her 82nd year. Ilona was the author of the just published MR Press book (translated from the German) *Workers in Arms: the Austrian Schutzbund and the Civil War of 1934,* a moving account, based in good part on her own personal experience, of the tragedy of Austrian social democracy after the First World War and the heroic armed resistance of the workers of Vienna to the fascist putsch of February 1934. As a young woman in Budapest during the First World War Ilona was sentenced to death for antiwar activity but was saved by the overthrow of the old regime. Following the fall of the Bela Kun government, she fled to Vienna where in 1922 she married Karl Polanyi who later became world famous as a founder of what is nowadays called economic anthropology. (Their daughter, Kari Levitt, is a professor of economics at McGill University in Montreal and author of *Silent Surrender,* one of the first and most influential studies of Canadian subordination to U.S. imperialism.) It is a source of gratification to us that Ilona lived long enough to see the English edition of her book. In a letter to one of MR's editors dated April 14th, on her return from what had become an annual trip to Europe, she wrote: "Oh, it was good to come home, dog-tired. And here I found the book, your 'welcome home' letter, Susan's, etc. I took it easy for a while—sleeping and reading. In Europe—that is, London, West Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Vienna again—I was running around in circles. It was all liberalization in Hungary, and all the opposite on the West German scene. For some time I've been concerning myself about German *Gesinnungsjustiz* [thought control] and the situation of political prisoners—having become happily 'unemployed' in that respect in Hungary." Ilona was a socialist of the old school, of the first generation after Marx and Engels, and for us her passing leaves a void which unfortunately can never be filled.

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